

TEEN TITANS
"Fear Itself"
Outline - 03/26/03
By Dwayne McDuffie

TEASER

A CROWDED CITY STREET. It's chaos. The TITANS are trying to make their way down the street, despite the screaming, terrified crowds of PEOPLE running in the other direction. Finally, we get to see what's they're running from, an anthropomorphized MAILBOX, LAMPPOST AND TRASHCAN. All of the objects have eyes, arms, open mouths and dripping fangs somehow integrated into their normal design. They're heading right for the nonplussed Titans. "There's something you don't see every day," deadpans CYBORG.

The Titans go into battle. CYBORG and RAVEN double team the MAILBOX, smashing it into confetti. BEAST BOY changes into a BEAR and trades ferocious growls with an increasingly insecure TRASHCAN (think of it as a burping contest) before taking it out. STARFIRE is buzzing the LAMPPOST, with mixed success, until mischievous ROBIN takes charge, busting the Lamppost's lamp with a stone from an improvised slingshot. As they stand over their fallen opponents, Beast Boy asks Robin to, "Admit it, you always wanted to do that." Robin can't quite contain his pleasure, "It was my duty."

There's no time for congratulations though. CONTROL FREAK, a fat nerdy kid holding a REMOTE CONTROL, enters the scene, accusing the Titans. "You did this, you wrecked my stuff!" He's apoplectic. Beast Boy doesn't even believe Control Freak's responsible for the weirdness. "Sure, you made the stuff come to life. You really look like a supervillain." Goaded beyond the patience of any reasonable nutjob, CF points his remote at several parked CARS. When he ZAPS them, they GLOW BRIEFLY (in a manner suggestive of Raven's "Soul-Self"), then COME TO LIFE. The Cars surround the TITANS, inching forward threateningly. Starfire asks Beast Boy, "Does he look like a Supervillain now?"

END TEASER

ACT ONE

A CROWDED CITY STREET. The Titans battle the "remote controlled" CARS, each using their unique powers to take down a different car (RAVEN's battle should demonstrate fearlessness). Robin actually hops in one of the cars and goes for a wild ride before "breaking" it like a wild horse. An impressed Cyborg notes that Robin has tamed the vehicle. "Cool. You going to keep it?" Robin was actually was maneuvering the car to get him closer to CONTROL FREAK. Robin's figured out if they get the Remote Control away from him, they can stop his rampage (a rampage that, near as anybody can figure out from his ranting, has something to do with the movie version of his favorite sword and sorcery book having a changed ending). For what it's worth, Beast Boy agrees with him - not that he's read the book.

Robin's not quite fast enough to grab the Remote, as he's waylaid by anthropomorphized ORANGES from a nearby Fruit Stand (they keep biting his ankles). Control Freak continues with his mission, finally arriving at his goal: The Video Store!

INSIDE THE VIDEO STORE, Control Freak can't help going on a sustained fanboy rant, complaining about how lousy all of his favorite movies are to a completely disinterested CLERK. When the TITANS arrive, he brags that they have fallen into his trap, "on these shelves are hundreds of movies! I can bring all those characters to life and make them attack you!"

Actually, he can't. When Control Freak points his remote control at them, the DVD's themselves come to life instead of the characters in their movies. The DVD's LEAP from the shelves snarling and snapping their jaws as they rush the underwhelmed heroes. Cyborg unceremoniously STOMPS the DVD's into a million pieces beneath his large metal foot. "Didn't you even think to try it out first?" Control Freak is embarrassed, "I don't have any good movies at home." Still, Control Freak has a back up plan. He remote controls several life-sized cardboard STANDEES. The two-dimensional cardboard men come to life and attack the TITANS. The battle absolutely wrecks the store. Finally, one of the Titans manages to knock a Standee back into Control Freak.

OPS AT NIGHT. It's movie night at TITANS TOWER. OPS is dark; and the team is parked on the sofa in front of the big BAY WINDOW TV, munching popcorn and suspicious clumps of goop that BEAST BOY claims are "s'mores". Anyway, Beast Boy's movie couldn't possibly be any creepier than the romance STARFIRE made them watch last week. ROBIN starts the movie; and as the Titans grin in anticipation (except stone-faced RAVEN), we CUT TO ...

TWO HOURS LATER: As the (off-screen) movie ends with a final bone-chilling scream, the Titans now sit in a comic wide-eyed-with-terror tableau: BEAST BOY cowers behind the sofa; Starfire watches through her fingers; Cyborg chews his metal fingernails; etc. As they turn on the lights, BB, Cy, and Star all sigh in relief, confessing how scared the movie made them. Even Robin has to admit that he was a little creeped out. But when Beast Boy asks Raven if she's still shaking in her boots, Raven quickly stifles her feelings with a stone-faced frown as she insists: "I don't do fear."

But that night, just as our heroes are drifting off to sleep, they're awakened by another bone-chilling scream.

But this time, it's not coming from the T.V. And when they try to turn on the lights -- all the lights simultaneously <SHORT OUT!> Speculating that the Tower may be under attack by one of their enemies, Robin orders the team to split up and search. But freaked-out Beast Boy balks at the order: "Split up?? Did you not SEE the movie?! Whenever the kids split up, the monster hunts 'em down one at a time -- starting with incredibly-handsome-comic-relief guy: ME!!"

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So the Titans search the FAMILIAR-BUT-SOMEHOW-CREEPY TOWER as a group -- and it soon becomes clear that *something* is turning their Tower into a haunted house: hallways don't lead where they should, POLTERGEISTS play potentially

dangerous tricks, doors open on infinite voids, and
MONSTROUS CREATURES attack unexpectedly

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. DR. FATE'S CONJURE CHAMBER - NIGHT. Wonder Woman leaps towards Aquaman, only to be thrown across the chamber. Superman moves to "free" Grundy, painfully fighting his way through the mystical nimbus of energy. Hawkgirl heads for Fate, her energy mace somehow causing a mystical feedback that knocks Fate down, ending the spell. Superman tries to help Grundy up, getting punched across the room for his trouble. Aquaman is livid. "Do you realize what you've done? Superman answers, "Stopped you from torturing that poor, dumb beast." Grundy senses he may have just been insulted. Aquaman orders them "out, now!" Not without Grundy -and a good explanation. Fate doesn't have time to argue, the spell was disrupted at a particularly delicate stage and he's trying to hold it all together. Aquaman decides to give Fate some room to work, "Grundy! Let's take them down!" The two teams of heroes face off. The battle is distracting Dr. Fate from his desperate efforts to maintain the spell. Fate teleports the combatants elsewhere in the Tower.

EXT. TEMPLE OF NABU - NIGHT. Superman and Grundy arrive in what looks like Egypt, they're outside? We gather that the nearby Pyramid is the actual temple of Nabu, where Fate's

Helmet was once secreted. Superman and Grundy begin a Kirby-style Hulk vs. Thing punch up that wrecks whole buildings. Grundy is desperate to win the battle, it seems as if everything's on the line for him...

INT. GARDEN OF DADA - DAY. Wonder Woman and Aquaman end up in an enclosed, overgrown Garden, with absurdly incongruous details that look like they were lifted from Dali's sketchbook. Wonder Woman is kicking Aquaman's ass until he tackles her, driving them both into a pool. Suddenly she's fighting Aquaman under water, with only a lungful of air.

INT. DR. FATE'S CONJURE CHAMBER - NIGHT. Hawkgirl's mace repels Fate's teleportation spell (and, as it turns out, any other direct attack). Dr. Fate confounds Hawkgirl with multiple images and other indirect but devastating magical attacks. During the fight. Hawkgirl is brought up short by the mystic rune on the floor. "Is that Thanagarian? What do you know? Talk!"

EXT. TEMPLE OF NABU - NIGHT. Superman defeats Grundy with an overwhelming display of power, burying him under tons of rock. Grundy is strangely valiant in his losing effort. Superman retrieves the unconscious Grundy and returns to the

spot where they entered, a strangely glowing "door" in mid-air that leads back to the center of the tower.

INT. GARDEN OF DADA - DAY. Likewise, Aquaman defeats Wonder Woman, who has run out of air. Dragging her behind him, he also finds a strangely glowing "door."

IN. DR FATE'S TOWER - CORRIDOR. In the corridor, Aquaman sees Superman with Grundy. He's ready to fight for him. Superman waves him off. It's past time that Aquaman explained himself. Aquaman doesn't think so, he launches himself at Superman.

INT. DR. FATE'S CONJURE CHAMBER - NIGHT. Instants later, Superman enters the Conjure Chamber, dragging the unconscious bodies of Aquaman and Grundy behind him. Wonder Woman, back on her feet again, follows closely behind. An enraged Hawkgirl has Fate on the defensive. She's about to strike him with her mace. Wonder Woman stops the potentially fatal blow. They demand to know what's going on. But it's not to be. The Tower is breached, the "sky" ripped asunder by the gigantic, semi-transparent image of ICHTHULTU, most exalted (and ugliest) of the Old Ones. His tentacle-fingers

tear the fabric of Space-Time as he forces an opening to our universe. Dr fate answers, "We were trying to stop that."

TO BE CONTINUED...

JUSTICE LEAGUE

Outline

"Out Of The Depths, Part Two"

07/19/02

PART TWO

TEASER

AQUAMAN, "Previously on Justice League..."

ACT THREE

INT. DR. FATE'S CONJURE CHAMBER - NIGHT. SUPERMAN, DR. FATE, HAWKGIRL, AQUAMAN, WONDER WOMAN and SOLOMON GRUNDY look up at the terrifying sight of ICHTHULTU tearing his way into our universe. Fate begins a mystic chant to temporarily seal the breach but he's weakening. To everyone's astonishment, Hawkgirl begins chanting with Fate, adding her strength to Fate's. The creature has been repulsed, if only temporarily. Fate asks Hawkgirl how she can possibly know this chant? "Where I come from it's as close as we have to a prayer." Fate prepares to re-cast the spell that the Justice League interrupted. Superman's pretty irritated at not knowing what's going on. Even Aquaman concedes it's past time they explained themselves...

FLASHBACK. Dr. Fate conjures a VISION that illustrates the story he and Aquaman tell. In dim pre-history, extradimensional beings known as the Old Ones were banished from the Earth by Atlantean sorcerers. Atlantis still sits across the "door." Now the Old Ones seek to return to our dimension, to overrun and enslave it. Already they have made small cracks, soon the breach will be large enough to allow the passage of the most powerful of the Old Ones, great ICHTHULTU.

INT. DR. FATE'S CONJURE CHAMBER - NIGHT. Fate explains that he was trying to cast a spell that will stop the Old Ones from entering again, a spell requiring "A wizard of great knowledge, the Trident of Poseidon, a man worthy of the Trident's power, and the forbearance of a dead man. Superman is disturbed at the thought of putting Grundy through that kind of torture. Hawkgirl says it's not exactly torture, "more like sacrifice." Eons ago, the Thanagarians also knew ICHTHULTU. In return for his favors, her ancestors made offerings to him of the living spirits of young Thanagarians, in ceremonies much like this one. Aquaman can't believe Hawkgirl's people ever cooperated with "that thing." They did though and received in return the basis of their technology,

agriculture -the early foundations of their entire culture. Eventually, the people of Thanagar decided it was better to get rid of ICHTHULTU than to keep appeasing it's ever-growing demands. From that day forward, her people have bowed down to no higher power, relying instead on their faith in themselves. Today, self-reliance is the only Thanagarian belief system.

Superman doesn't like the idea of the spell. Sacrificing Grundy's spirit seems like a decision he isn't competent to make. Dr. Fate explains that as a dead man, he has no spirit to lose, he's simply bait for the trap. Grundy wants to do it, so that Fate will grant his wish after it's all over. They all argue whether Grundy has a soul. Wonder Woman agrees with Superman, "there has to be another way." Hawkgirl thinks there is. "We go to ICHTHULTU's dimension and finish this, once and for all." Dr. Fate agrees that it may be possible. It's certainly more likely to work that re-casting the interrupted spell. Fate transports them to "The Dark Dimension," home of ICHTHULTU and his like.

INT. DARK DIMENSION - NIGHT. Fate, Grundy, Aquaman and the League arrive in a Ditko-esque landscape of bizarre

sights and dizzying scale. They follow Fate down a winding ribbon of road towards "the source of the evil."

EXT. ROAD TO ICHTHULTU - NIGHT. The Justice Leaguers begin to fly. Fate casts a spell yanking them back to the ground. He warns them that they must stay closely together on the road as, "In this realm, ground and sky are not parallel. If you leave the road, you will become hopelessly lost."

On the way, they see a hideous sight. THE BREACH to Earth's dimension is swarming with tentacled creatures. It looks like a mountain-sized pile of maggots --all intent, Dr. Fate tells us, on breaking into our world. Aquaman wants to go take them on. Fate says no. "The real evil is this way. Our efforts must be concentrated there."

The group is attacked by lesser Old Ones (proof that they're on the right track), equally as hideous, but only a bit bigger than the heroes themselves. AQUAMAN is almost relieved to finally have something to hit. He is relentless in leading a savage attack on them. All contribute as the heroes win, Hawkgirl rescues Grundy

from certain doom. This surprises him, as "You don't need me anymore." Hawkgirl brushes it off. "You're with us for now. That's good enough for me."

As the Heroes continue their trek. Hawkgirl asks Wonder Woman if she really gains strength from her faith in her gods. Wonder Woman does and suggests that all the leaguers have a faith that they can rely on to sustain them. She doesn't know how Hawkgirl can bear it all alone. Solomon Grundy interrupts, surprisingly clear in his own faith. Of course there's something more than just this. All are surprised when the end of the "road" they've been walking on twists around and opens an immense eye to look at them. They've been in the presence of ICHTHULTU the entire time.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. ICHTHULTU - DAY. ICHTHULTU is intrigued by the "specks" who dare to challenge him, particularly the one who has "the stench of the Thanagarians" on her. ICHTHULTU's "antibodies" (other extradimensional creatures, also physically on the heroes' scale) attack the others, Ichthultu ensnares Hawkgirl, binding her in tentacles hand and foot.

Free for all as the heroes face off with key Old Ones loosely based on TSATHOGLUA (a toad-thing), HASTUR (a Silver Surferish "lord of space"), ITHAQUA (a Wendigo), AZATHOTH (blind god of chaos) and NODENS (silver-armed "lord of the Abyss). This is going to be a mix-and-match battle, to contrast with the one-on-ones in the first part of the story. We're really going to use the bizarre location and the very strange appearances and powers of the villains to advantage. This will intercut with Hawkgirl's head-to-head.

EXT. ICHTHULTU - DAY. ICHTHULTU handles Hawkgirl like a child's toy, questioning her about her people and their faith. Why did the Thanagarians forsake him? He did so

much for them. Ichthultu is convincing and Hawkgirl's faith is shaken but she reminds Ichthultu why they cast him out, his tribute, the living spirits of her ancestors, was too much to ask. She charges the gigantic creature with her pitiful mace. Ichthultu is going to enjoy consuming her.

Grundy has overheard that Ichthultu consumes spirits. With strength born from his rage, he fights free of the lesser threats and attacks Ichthultu. He wants his spirit back. Ichthultu doesn't have it but it doesn't matter.

INT. ICHTHULTU - DAY. Grundy tears his way to the mass that seems to be Ichthultu's brain (or heart, whatever, it's something important). Grundy won't stop coming, even as Ichthultu beats him nearly to death. Grundy goes down, finally out of strength. Grundy has made a passageway that allows the enraged Hawkgirl to strike at Ichthultu's heart with her mace. The entire universe shudders with Ichthultu's pain. She returns to the dying Grundy, cradling his body in her lap like the *pieta*. He asks her if his spirit is waiting for him where he's going. She starts to tell him that there's no such thing as a spirit but seeing the beautiful hope on his face she tells him

yes. Grundy expires with a smile on his face and turns to energy, leaving her with empty arms. Superman pulls her away "We have to go. The whole place is coming apart." Dr. Fate casts a spell and all except Grundy are transported back to Earth.

INT. DR. FATE'S CONJURE CHAMBER - DAY. On Earth, Wonder Woman and Superman try to comfort Hawkgirl. Even if she's without faith except for faith in herself, they can all count on each other. WW and Supes smile at the truism.

Hawkgirl responds only with the silent tears running down her stoic face.

THE END